

Douglas Stuart receives honorary degree

Heriot Watt University has bestowed an honorary degree on the Booker prize-winning author, Douglas Stuart.

Stuart studied at the university achieving a BA Honours in Textiles in 1998. He used this learning in his first career in fashion, working as a Senior Designer for Calvin Klein and Ralph Lauren before becoming the Head of Design at Gap Inc and later at Kate Spade.

His debut novel, *Shuggie Bain* became a best-seller and Stuart was only the second Scot to win the coveted Booker prize last year.

Shuggie Bain has been a finalist for over twenty international literary awards, including the National Book Award, The Pen Hemingway Award, The Orwell Prize and the Andrew Carnegie Medal and the Scots vernacular will be translated into 39 languages. Stuart's second novel is called *Young Mungo* and will be published next April.

Douglas said: "I am truly humbled to receive this recognition today. Higher education transformed everything for me. It opened up possibilities that I would never have dreamt were possible. My time studying at the Galashiels campus gave me all the skills I carry with me in life, and allowed me to express myself in not one, but two creative fields. I will be forever grateful to the educators at Heriot Watt who noticed my potential, who believed in me when I didn't always

believe in myself, and who guided me onwards when I was unsure of the path before me.”

Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Richard A. Williams, shared his congratulations with Douglas, saying: “Douglas has carved out an incredibly successful career in both fashion and literature and I’m sure many more of his achievements are still to come. It is a privilege to welcome him back to the University and to present him with his honorary degree, which he richly deserves.

“Douglas is currently one of the largest literary figures in the UK and I know, holds a great deal of affection for this University. He has and remains a champion for student achievement and in the transformational impact of education, beliefs which are shared by this University.”

The Scot lives in New York but attended the Edinburgh International Book Festival which concluded with Stuart in conversation with First Minister, Nicola Sturgeon, live, in person and in front of an audience in the New York Times Sculpture Court for his first appearance in Scotland since *Shuggie Bain* won the Booker Prize.

